

## The darker side of personality

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**Abstract**

Despite a plethora of research on moral disengagement and antisocial behavior, there is a dearth of literature that explores personality in the context of these undesirable attitudes and behaviors. We provide the first examination of personality, specifically narcissism, as a predictor of moral disengagement and antisocial behavior in sport. Given that narcissism is negatively related to empathy and positively related to feelings of entitlement, it is more likely for narcissists to disengage morally and to behave antisocially. We thus hypothesized that narcissism would predict antisocial behavior via moral disengagement. Across 12 team contact sports ( $n = 272$ ), bootstrapped mediation analyses confirmed this indirect effect, which remained significant when controlling for motivational climate, social desirability, sex and sport type. Coaches and practitioners would do well to consider the darker side of personality in targeting moral disengagement and its behavioral consequences in team sports.

The darker side of personality: Narcissism predicts moral disengagement and antisocial behavior in sport

Issues surrounding immorality in sport have been widely discussed (for a review see Kavussanu, 2008), and researchers have attempted to identify the antecedents that might underpin any associated antisocial behaviors. Sage, Kavussanu and Duda (2006) described antisocial behavior as acts with intentions of hurting or disadvantaging another, which are prevalent in sport and can negatively affect the wellbeing of others. Surreptitiously handling the ball in soccer to gain an unfair advantage exemplifies an antisocial act in the context of breaking soccer rules, deceiving the officials, and disadvantaging the opponents, while simultaneously becoming glorious. Other examples of antisocial behavior in sport include trying to injure an opponent or deceiving officials by faking injury (Sage et al., 2006).

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986, 1991) offers a process by which individuals may choose to engage in antisocial behaviors. This theory explains that moral judgement is linked to moral action via affective self-regulatory mechanisms by which an individual's ability to distinguish between right and wrong is exercised. Within this self-regulatory process, individuals are able to monitor their conduct and the conditions under which it occurs by judging conduct in relation to their moral standards and perceived circumstances. The consequences that individuals generate for themselves in response to their conduct then serve as a means of regulating their actions (Bandura, 2002). Such affective mechanisms encompass self-organization, proactivity, self-reflection, and self-regulation (Bandura, 2002). These mechanisms provide a process for motivation, along with the psychological regulators of moral conduct that allow one to engage in moral agency, or perhaps deviate from this regulation and become morally disengaged (Bandura, 2002).

Moral disengagement is a process by which one suspends moral standards in an effort to reduce negative self-judgment, which one would otherwise experience when violating

these standards. Bandura (1991) proposed the selective use of eight psychosocial mechanisms, collectively known as the mechanisms of moral disengagement, which allow individuals to transgress without experiencing negative affect (e.g., guilt). The eight mechanisms of moral disengagement are moral justification, euphemistic labeling, conduct reconstrual, dehumanization, attribution of blame, non-responsibility, advantageous comparison, and distortion of consequences (Bandura, 1991). Bandura (1986, 1991) identified moral disengagement as a process that may positively predict antisocial behavior within individuals. Boardley and Kavussanu (2008) developed an instrument to measure the eight mechanisms of moral disengagement in contact team sports, and in line with Bandura's theory (1991), recent research has revealed that moral disengagement positively predicts antisocial behavior in sport (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2009, 2011; Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011; Stanger, Kavussanu, Boardley & Ring, 2013).

Although moral disengagement is now a well-established predictor of antisocial behavior, little research has examined personality variables as predictors of moral behavior in sport. This gap in the literature is particularly surprising in the context of the competitive team sport environment, in which there is constant pressure to perform as an individual and as part of a team. In this environment, individuals may attempt to cheat for the good of the team (e.g., surreptitiously handling the ball in soccer to gain an advantage) or conversely they might engage in antisocial acts that compromise a team's climate or chances of success (e.g., being sent off in a soccer match for an aggressive act). Researchers have typically investigated personality and individual differences on specific variables rather than testing how specific personality traits might differentially relate to undesirable attitudes and behaviors (see Roberts & Woodman, 2015). Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that few studies have considered the effects of personality and individual differences when investigating moral disengagement and antisocial behavior in sport. However, the personality trait of

100    *narcissism* appears to hold much promise in this regard because it seamlessly dovetails the  
101    psychological process of moral disengagement.

102            In clinical settings narcissism is defined as “a pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in  
103    fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and a lack of empathy” (American Psychiatric  
104    Association, 2013, p. 669). The term narcissism has been extended beyond its pathological  
105    origins to encompass many tendencies among ostensibly normal individuals, and empirical  
106    research on subclinical narcissism has developed considerably since the availability of the  
107    Narcissistic Personality Inventory (e.g., NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988). Seven subtraits of  
108    subclinical narcissism are identified and explained within the NPI: *authority* - narcissists are  
109    said to enjoy leading and being viewed as authoritarians; *exhibitionism* – narcissists are likely  
110    to engage in extravagant behavior that is intended to attract attention to oneself; *superiority* -  
111    narcissists are known to have an inflated sense of self-worth, indicative of grandiosity; *vanity* -  
112    narcissists are reported to overestimate their abilities; *exploitativeness* – narcissists exploit  
113    others in order to get what they want, and disregard any potential destruction; *entitlement* –  
114    narcissists demonstrate unreasonable expectancies of others, and favorable treatment or  
115    automatic compliance with their own expectations; *self-sufficiency* – provided that the task at  
116    hand presents an opportunity for glory, it is unlikely that a narcissist will request the aid of  
117    others, and will instead seek to take full credit for themselves.

118            Empirical research on subclinical narcissism has established that narcissistic  
119    individuals think highly of themselves and their abilities, and have unusually high self-  
120    expectations (Farwell & Wohlwend-Lloyd, 1998). The consequence of fulfilling such high  
121    self-expectations may re-enforce narcissists’ belief in their own superiority (cf. Campbell,  
122    Goodie, & Foster, 2004) and increase their tendency to exhibit vanity. These self-  
123    aggrandizing motives may help to provide some preliminary insight into how far narcissists

124 are willing to go in order to attain their goals, and may be fertile terrain for moral  
125 disengagement and subsequent antisocial behavior.

126       The link between narcissism and moral disengagement is all the more likely when  
127 considering narcissists' feelings of self-entitlement (Raskin & Terry, 1988), their pursuit of  
128 personal glory (Roberts & Woodman, 2015) and their attraction to performance motivational  
129 climates (Roberts, Woodman, Lofthouse, & Williams, 2015; Woodman, Roberts, Hardy,  
130 Callow & Rogers, 2011 ). Research has also revealed that performance climates are  
131 positively related to anti-social behavior (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2010; Bortoli, Messina,  
132 Zorba & Robazza, 2012) and that moral disengagement mediates this relationship (Boardley  
133 & Kavussanu, 2010). Consequently, a narcissist's attraction to performance climates may  
134 increase their propensity to subsequently engage in immoral behavior. One might further  
135 expect narcissists' behavior to reflect immoral conduct if it serves to disadvantage those  
136 around them in the process of striving toward personal success, reflecting a degree of  
137 dehumanization. That is, narcissists' egocentric nature, including entitlement, dominance, and  
138 superiority (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001), might prove rather too intra-personally prevalent to  
139 place sufficient importance on attending to morally acceptable social cognitive processes.  
140 Instead, narcissists' egocentric focus may increase the likelihood of justifying thought  
141 process (distortion of consequences) and distorting consequences (conduct reconstrual), thus  
142 increasing the likelihood of moral disengagement. The positive link between narcissism and  
143 moral disengagement is all the more likely, given how narcissists lack empathy for others  
144 (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001), and is emphasized further by the negative link observed between  
145 empathy and moral disengagement in sport (e.g., Shields, Funk & Bredemeier., 2015;  
146 Stanger, Kavussanu, Willoughby & Ring, 2012).

147       Common features across both narcissism and moral disengagement have been  
148 highlighted in the literature, specifically in the form of Machiavellianism, low agreeableness,

and psychopathy (Egan, Hughes & Palmer, 2015). Furthermore, Reidy, Zeichner, Foster, and Martinez (2008) revealed that, in a cohort of university students, narcissism positively predicted aggression; with entitlement and exploitativeness being the strongest narcissistic subtrait predictors. Additionally, Reidy et al. (2008) revealed that entitled and exploitative narcissists are more likely to use aggression more frequently across different interpersonal contexts, in various forms (e.g., direct, indirect, physical, verbal), and to do so at greater levels within each of those contexts (Bushman & Anderson, 1998). Given narcissists' propensity to use aggression across interpersonal contexts, a team sport environment may provide a fruitful platform for these antisocial behaviors to emerge.

In summary, the personality trait of *narcissism* appears predictive of the psychological process of moral disengagement, which in turn is a key factor in positively predicting antisocial behavior. Thus, the primary aims of the present study were to assess the relationship between narcissism and antisocial behavior, and to investigate whether moral disengagement mediated any such relationship. Consequently, we hypothesized that narcissism would directly and positively predict antisocial behavior ( $H^1$ ). We also hypothesized that moral disengagement would mediate the relationship between narcissism and antisocial behavior ( $H^2$ ).

Two additional variables appear particularly worthy of consideration in the present study: social desirability and motivational climate. First, considering that the etiology of a narcissist includes a need for admiration, it is likely that narcissists would be more likely to portray a desired image of the self (i.e., higher social desirability). Conversely, whilst narcissists lack empathy (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001), it is also possible that narcissists would be more likely to display lower social desirability. As a result, we deemed it important to control for social desirability. Second, as researchers have revealed the potential influence of motivational climate (mastery climate and performance climate) in predicting antisocial



behaviors (Bortoli, Messina, Zorba, & Robazza, 2012), we wanted to test the effects of narcissism whilst controlling for motivational climate. Finally, we conducted a set of exploratory analyses to explore the potential moderating effect of motivational climate on the relationships between narcissism and moral disengagement, and narcissism and antisocial behavior.

## Method

### Participants

The sample comprised 272 participants (men = 193; women = 79;  $M_{\text{age}} = 22.62$ ;  $SD = 6.44$ ) from a variety of amateur medium- to high-contact sport teams (American Football,  $n = 6$ ; Basketball,  $n = 2$ ; Canoe Polo,  $n = 2$ ; Gaelic Football,  $n = 6$ ; Handball,  $n = 9$ ; Hockey,  $n = 27$ ; Lacrosse,  $n = 5$ ; Polocrosse,  $n = 1$ ; Rugby League,  $n = 7$ ; Rugby Union,  $n = 49$ ; Soccer,  $n = 148$ ; Ultimate,  $n = 10$ ) who reported participating in their chosen sport at least once per week. Participants were recruited worldwide (e.g., UK, Australia, Canada, USA) via Internet advertisements that were circulated on social media (e.g., Facebook). We offered the chance to win £50 (approximately US\$85) on completion of the online inventories as an incentive for participation.

### Measures

**The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-16).** The NPI-16 (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006) is a 16-item measure of narcissism that is based on the 40-item NPI (Raskin & Terry, 1988). Both measures are designed to assess participants' degree of narcissism as reflected by a grandiose sense of self, feelings of entitlement, lack of empathy for others, and an exploitative interpersonal style. Each item contains a narcissistic statement (e.g., *I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so*) and a non-narcissistic statement (e.g., *When people compliment me I sometimes get embarrassed*) in a forced-choice format, meaning that participants receive a narcissism score that ranges from 0 to 16. The NPI-16 has

199 good face, internal, discriminant, and predictive validity (Ames et al., 2006) and reliability  
 200 (e.g., Gebauer, Sedikides, Verplanken, & Maio, 2012;  $\alpha = .74$ ). The reliability coefficients of  
 201 each measure in the present study are presented in Table 1.

202 **Moral Disengagement in Sport Scale-Short (MDSS-S).** The MDSS-S (Boardley &  
 203 Kavussanu, 2008) is an eight-item measure of moral disengagement (e.g., Bending the rules  
 204 is a way of evening things) and is measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1  
 205 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*). Each item corresponds to one of the eight  
 206 mechanisms of moral disengagement. Boardley and Kavussanu (2008) reported good  
 207 construct validity for this short measure of moral disengagement. Recent research has further  
 208 supported the reliability of the MDSS-S (e.g., Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011;  $\alpha = .83$ ).

209 **Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior in Sport Scale (PABSS).** The 20-item PABSS  
 210 (Kavussanu & Boardley, 2009; Kavussanu, Stanger, & Boardley, 2013) comprises four  
 211 subscales: (i) prosocial behavior toward teammates (four items; e.g., *congratulated a*  
 212 *teammate/training partner*); (ii) prosocial behavior toward opponents (three items; e.g.,  
 213 *helped an injured opponent*); (iii) antisocial behavior toward teammates (five items; e.g.,  
 214 *verbally abused a teammate/training partner*) and (iv) antisocial behavior toward opponents  
 215 (eight items; e.g., *physically intimidated an opponent*). In line with previous methodological  
 216 approaches (e.g., Sagar, Boardley & Kavussanu, 2011), we computed the scores of all items  
 217 to produce separate scores for overall prosocial and antisocial behaviors in the present study.  
 218 Kavussanu and Boardley (2009) and Kavussanu, Stanger, and Boardley (2013) reported  
 219 satisfactory concurrent, discriminant, and convergent validity, and good reliability ( $\alpha$  range =  
 220 .68 to .86.) for the PABSS.

221 **Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire-2 (PMCSQ-2).** The  
 222 PMCSQ-2 (Newton, Duda, & Yin, 2000) measures the motivational climate within which  
 223 participants perceive that they operate and comprises 33 items, 17 of which reflect a mastery

climate (e.g., *On this team, players are encouraged to work on their weaknesses*) and 16 of which reflect a performance climate (e.g., *On this team, only the players with the best 'stats' get praise*). The items are scored on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*). Newton et al. reported evidence for good concurrent validity, and Boyd, Kim, Ensari, and Yin (2014) recently reported good internal reliability ( $\alpha = .86$ ) for the PMCSQ-2.

**Social Desirability Scale (SDS).** The SDS (Form C; Reynolds, 1982) measures an individual's tendency to act in a social desirable manner and comprises 13 items (e.g., *No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener*) on a "true" or "false" forced-choice format. "True" responses represent the individual's propensity to behave in a sociably desirable manner. Reynolds reported satisfactory concurrent validity using this short-form scale. Sârbescu, Costea, and Rusu (2012) also reported good reliability for the SDS ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

## **Procedure**

The study received institutional ethics approval. Participants completed the survey online after social media recruitment adverts had led them to a webpage providing details of the research, a confidentiality agreement, and a notification that proceeding to the next webpage was an expression of informed consent to participate. If they chose to continue, participants provided demographic data before completing the SDS-S, NPI-16, PMCSQ-2, MDSS-S, and PABSS. The whole procedure took approximately 20 minutes.

## **Results**

### **Preliminary analysis**

**Sex Differences.** Previous research has revealed sex differences in the variables under examination: narcissism (Grijalva et al., 2015), perceived motivational climate (Murcia, Gimeno & Coll, 2014), moral disengagement (Stanger et al., 2013) and antisocial behavior (Kavussanu, Stamp, Slade & Ring, 2009). We conducted a MANOVA to ascertain whether

249 there were sex differences for narcissism, moral disengagement, antisocial behavior,  
250 performance climate, mastery climate and social desirability. Results revealed a significant  
251 difference between the sexes,  $F(6, 265) = 23.66, p < .001$ ; Wilks'  $\Lambda = 0.65, \eta_p^2 = .35$ . Follow-  
252 up univariate ANOVAs confirmed that men scored significantly higher than women on  
253 narcissism,  $F(1, 270) = 31.73, p < .001$ ; moral disengagement,  $F(1, 270) = 54.78, p < .001$ ;  
254 antisocial behavior,  $F(1, 270) = 104.71, p < .001$ ; performance climate,  $F(1, 270) = 28.80, p$   
255  $< .001$ ; and social desirability:  $F(1, 270) = 4.10, p = .04$ ; and that women scored significantly  
256 higher than men on mastery climate,  $F(1, 270) = 15.11, p < .001$ .

257 Additionally, because the rules of each sport are different, an individual's propensity  
258 to disengage morally or to partake in antisocial behavior may vary according to sport. As  
259 such, due to this nested nature of team sports, we controlled for sport type in subsequent  
260 analyses. Thus, social desirability, performance climate, mastery climate, sex, and sport were  
261 included as control variables in all subsequent mediation models.

## 262 **Correlational Analysis**

263 We present means and zero-order correlations in Table 1. In support of our theoretical  
264 stance, moral disengagement was positively correlated with antisocial behavior, and  
265 narcissism was positively correlated with both moral disengagement and antisocial behavior.  
266 Additionally, performance climate was positively correlated with narcissism, moral  
267 disengagement and antisocial behavior.

## 268 **Mediation Analyses**

269 We tested the mediating role of moral disengagement in the narcissism and antisocial  
270 behavior relationship, using version 2.10 of the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) using 5,000  
271 bootstrap samples. We deemed a mediation effect significant if the upper and lower 95%  
272 Confidence Interval limits of the size of the indirect path did not include zero. In support of  
273 our hypotheses, moral disengagement mediated the positive relationship between narcissism

and antisocial behavior when measuring the unstandardized indirect effect of narcissism ( $b = .06$ ,  $CI = .01$  to  $.11$ ; see Figure 1) and including social desirability, motivational climate, sex, and sport as control variables<sup>1</sup>. It should be highlighted that narcissism positively predicted antisocial behavior for both the teammates ( $b = .10$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and opponents ( $b = .15$ ,  $p < .001$ ) subscales, and was mediated by moral disengagement.

### **Moderation Analyses**

In light of the positive relationships observed between performance climate and both moral disengagement and antisocial behavior, we conducted a series of moderation analyses to further explore the nature of these relationships. Specifically, we examined the moderating effect of performance climate on the relationships between narcissism and moral disengagement, which revealed no significant interaction ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.00$ ,  $F(1, 268) = 0.10$ ,  $p = .75$ , 95%  $CI [-.031, .042]$ ). We also examined this potential moderating effect on the narcissism and antisocial behavior relationship, which was also not significant ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$ ,  $F(1, 268) = 3.51$ ,  $p = .06$ , 95%  $CI [-.084, .002]$ ). Considering that the analysis approached significance, we examined the simple slopes which revealed that the relationship between narcissism and antisocial behavior was significant (and positive) at both low and high levels of performance climate, thus indicating no evidence of moderation. For the sake of completeness, we also explored the potential moderating effect of mastery climate on the relationships between narcissism and moral disengagement ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$ ,  $F(1, 268) = 2.80$ ,  $p = .10$ , 95%  $CI [-.01, .07]$ ) and between narcissism and antisocial behavior ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$ ,  $F(1, 268) = 3.50$ ,  $p = .16$ , 95%  $CI [-.01, .07]$ ), which were not significant. In summary for the moderation analyses, motivational climate did not moderate the relationship between narcissism and moral disengagement or the relationship between narcissism and antisocial behavior. Furthermore, a series of moderated mediation analyses (Hayes, 2015) revealed no moderating effect of performance climate (index of moderated mediation  $.00$ , 95%  $CI [-.02,$

.03]) or mastery climate (index of moderated mediation .02, 95% CI [-.01, .05] on the narcissism-moral disengagement-antisocial behavior relationship.

### Discussion

The primary goal of the present study was to assess whether narcissism would predict antisocial behavior and whether moral disengagement would mediate this relationship. This hypothesis was fully supported and demonstrates that narcissism is a significant personality predictor of antisocial behavior in sport. The findings were robust to the effects of social desirability and motivational climate. These data provide the first evidence that personality, specifically narcissism, predicts moral disengagement and antisocial behavior in sport.

The positive link between narcissism and antisocial behavior is theoretically grounded in the underlying etiology and correlates of these constructs. That is, characteristics such as manipulation are common across narcissism (e.g., Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001) and antisocial personality disorder (e.g., Bursten, 1989). For example, narcissists have been shown to relate to and manipulate people by objectifying them and viewing them for what they can offer (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Narcissists have also been shown to prioritize their personal successes in their quest for admiration (Ong, Roberts, Arthur, Woodman, & Akehurst, 2016; Roberts et al., 2015), similar to the antisocial personality in their disregard for others (Bursten, 1989).

The present research offers a process by which personality (specifically narcissism) leads to antisocial behaviors. Whilst it is equally possible for individuals to engage in moral agency, rather than moral disengagement (Bandura, 2002), it is conceivable from the present findings that narcissists may convince themselves that moral standards do not apply to them in a sporting context, creating a version of reality in which reprehensible conduct becomes morally acceptable (Brunell & Gentry, 2008). The findings also fill the void between how narcissism leads to antisocial behaviour by offering a mechanism to explain this process. That

is, narcissists are more likely to disengage morally, rather than to engage in moral agency, demonstrating precisely how these individuals could consequently behave antisocially.

The positive link observed between moral disengagement and antisocial behavior in the present study is well established both theoretically (Bandura, 1991, 1999) and in the sporting literature (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2009, 2011; Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011; Stanger et al., 2013). In recognizing the considerable difficulty of changing one's personality, methods of reducing moral disengagement and subsequent antisocial behaviors are worth considering. Moral disengagement functions in the perpetration of inhumanities, including the diffusing or displacement of responsibility (Bandura, 2002). For this reason, promoting responsibility for one's actions could serve as a means of reducing the prevalence of moral disengagement, and may instead promote moral *engagement* and *prosocial* (rather than antisocial) behaviors in the climates that support staff create within teams (Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011). Specifically, coaches could promote personal responsibility for individuals' actions during practice and competition. For example, within a team sport the coach could rotate the role of captain from game to game, thus increasing responsibility for all individuals and their actions within the team.

When considering the effects of motivational climate, our results concur with previous findings that suggest that a performance climate is positively associated with moral disengagement and antisocial behavior in team sports, whereas a mastery climate is negatively associated with these undesirable attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Bortoli et al., 2012). Specifically in the present data, there was a positive relationship between performance climate and moral disengagement and antisocial behavior, and a negative relationship between mastery climate and moral disengagement and antisocial behavior (see Table 1). Furthermore, the secondary set of analyses, which examined the potential moderating effect of motivational climate on the narcissism-moral disengagement-antisocial behavior

relationship, revealed no evidence of moderated mediation. There is thus no evidence that the narcissism-moral disengagement-antisocial behavior relationship is contingent on motivational climate.

Given the cross-sectional design of the present study, a definitive conclusion regarding the causal nature of the narcissism, moral disengagement, and antisocial behavior relationship would be premature. However, arguments for an alternative interpretation would stand on rather less solid theoretical ground. Specifically, such an alternative causal argument would be that attitudes and behaviors causally influence the formation of stable personality traits. Additionally, the cognitive process of moral disengagement theoretically precedes the act of behaving antisocially (Bandura, 1999).

Beyond the agentic form of narcissism that we have reported in this study, future research would benefit from using an additional measure that considers the vulnerable component of narcissism (e.g., Miller, Gentile, Wilson & Campbell, 2013) alongside the NPI. Vulnerable narcissists are described as emotionally sensitive individuals who are less prone to show their feelings (Besser & Priel, 2010). Given this relative lack of expression, one might argue that they may be less likely to engage in antisocial behavior. Conversely, given that vulnerable narcissists crave self-pity and are less likely to take responsibility for their actions (Baskin-Sommers, Krusemark & Ronningstam, 2014), one might argue that they would be more likely to engage in moral disengagement and subsequent antisocial behavior. The paradoxical nature of these potential links are fruitful grounds for further investigation into narcissism in the context of moral behavior in sport. Additionally, this line of research would also benefit from an exploration of other Big 5 personality variables that might show further promise in explaining how personality predicts antisocial behavior. Indeed, Big 5 personality traits such as conscientiousness and agreeableness may reveal a mediating or moderating relationship between narcissism and subsequent behavior. However, researchers



374 who are willing to extend personality research beyond the traditional Big 5 may derive the  
375 greatest insights into the personality types most prone to antisocial behavior in sport. That  
376 said, we maintain that narcissism is likely the most promising personality candidate for  
377 exploring such attitudes and behavior because of the strong theoretical fit between this  
378 personality trait and the darker side of morality.

### 379 **Conclusion**

380 In summary, we provide the first evidence that narcissism positively predicts  
381 antisocial behavior, and that moral disengagement mediates this relationship. Moral  
382 disengagement remained a significant mediator when controlling for motivational climate,  
383 social desirability, sex and sport. In a sporting context wherein antisocial behavior (e.g., rule  
384 breaking) can adversely impact the offending athlete (e.g., suspensions), the recipient of the  
385 behavior (e.g., injury), the team (e.g., selection issues), and the organization (e.g., fines),  
386 practitioners would do well to develop an awareness of individuals' personality that  
387 underpins their proneness to moral disengagement and subsequent antisocial behavior. This  
388 message is of course equally valid for research as it is for applied practice.

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518 **Table 1.**

519 Descriptive statistics and two-tailed zero-order Pearson correlation coefficients.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Narcissism	(.73)						
2. Moral Disengagement	.19***	(.80)					
3. Antisocial Behavior	.27***	.56***	(.91)				
4. Prosocial Behavior	.17	-.12***	.07	(.76)			
5. Mastery Climate	-.02	-.11*	-.09	.30***	(.93)		
6. Performance Climate	.09	.31***	.20***	-.14**	-.55***	(.89)	
7. Social Desirability	-.25***	-.31***	-.35***	.16***	.15***	-.17***	(.67)
Mean	3.10	3.04	2.37	4.08	3.97	2.52	7.43
(SD)	(3.02)	(1.86)	(1.25)	(0.90)	(0.92)	(1.10)	(2.78)

520 *Note.* Alpha coefficients are on the diagonal in parentheses. Narcissism: NPI-16 on a range of 0-16 (Ames et al., 2006). Moral disengagement: MDSS-S on a range of 1-7  
521 (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2008). Antisocial behavior: PABSS on a range of 1-5. Pro-social behavior: PABSS on a range of 1-5 (Kavussanu & Boardley, 2009). Mastery  
522 Climate: PMSCQ-2 on a range of 1-5. Performance climate: PMSCQ-2 on a range of 1-5 (Newton et al., 2000). Social desirability: SDS on a range of 0-13 (Reynolds, 1982).

523 \*  $p < .05$       \*\*  $p < .01$       \*\*\*  $p < .001$



## Footnotes

524 <sup>1</sup> Moral disengagement also mediated the positive relationship between narcissism and  
525 antisocial behavior when no control variables were included in the analysis ( $ab$ ,  $b = .09$ ,  $CI =$   
526  $.03$  to  $.17$ ). Furthermore, moral disengagement mediated the positive relationship between  
527 narcissism and antisocial behavior toward teammates ( $ab$ ,  $b = .06$ ,  $CI = .13$  to  $.37$ ) and toward  
528 opponents ( $ab$ ,  $b = .12$ ,  $CI = .01$  to  $.11$ ) subscales. For the sake of completeness, we also  
529 assessed the mediating effect of moral disengagement on the narcissism - prosocial behavior  
530 relationship; this relationship was not significant ( $CI = -.08$  to  $1.9$ ).